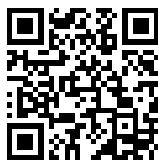

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C. Alphonso Smith.*

INTERPRETATIVE SYNTAX

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL DIVISION OF
THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA,
AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT VAN-
DERBILT UNIVERSITY, NASHVILLE,
TENN., DECEMBER, 1899

BY

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INTERPRETATIVE SYNTAX.¹

I am well aware that the expression interpretative syntax has not the prestige of previous usage. Indeed no one at all familiar with the modern trend of syntactical studies could say that they serve in the slightest degree as aids in the interpretation of literature. It seems to be assumed that syntax has nothing to do with literary criticism or with stylistic effects. And as the study of English syntax is now conducted, one can hardly imagine two persons more alien in their aims and methods than the literary critic and the writer on syntax.

It does not avail to cite beautiful definitions of philology, definitions that assert the philologist's equal right to all the slopes of Parnassus; this alienation exists in practice, and it has proved hurtful both to the student of literature and to the student of syntax. Literary criticism, lacking the solid basis of language study, has lost the note of authority and become mincing and arbitrary; while studies in syntax, divorced from the vitalizing influence of literature, have become mechanical in method and statistical in result.

Of the two, syntax has lost the more heavily; for in the study of syntax counting has so taken the place of weighing that it may fairly be questioned whether the majority of monographs devoted to English syntax make any appeal whatsoever to the real feeling for syntax latent in the reader, or latent even in the investigator himself. There is such a thing as a feeling for syntax, a syntactic sense,—though we are in danger of losing it,—a sense that is as necessary for appreciating the range and import of syntactical distinctions as

¹ Address of the President of the Central Division of the Modern Language Association of America, at its Annual Meeting held at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., December, 1899.

taste is necessary in the realm of æsthetics or conscience in the realm of morals.

Not only is the study of syntax divorced from the study of literature, not only has the feeling for syntactical distinctions been blunted by the mania for statistics, but the old line of cleavage is still run between syntax and inflections. The grammars and special monographs continue to treat inflections and syntax as two separate and unrelated subjects. But a moment's consideration will show that inflectional forms are the product of syntactical relations. They are the deposit of syntactical forces. One might as well try to explain the rounded forms of pebbles in a streamlet, without considering the agency of the water, as to explain inflectional changes apart from the syntactical agencies that shaped them.

Syntax has thus become narrowed and isolate. No longer looked upon as an integral and organic part of language and literature, it is viewed as something external, a mere scaffolding,—a series of separate ladders, on which Germans are ascending and descending. Now syntax is not something external; its problems are not separate at all. It is a vast network with countless radiations and interweavings. The best investigator is not one who is quick at figures or dead to literature. He is rather one who in his alertness and susceptibility should suggest old Sir John Davies's idea of the soul,—being

“Much like a subtle spider which doth sit
In middle of her web, which spreadeth wide;
If aught do touch the utmost thread of it,
She feels it instantly on every side.”

There are poetic effects both subtle and far-reaching that find expression in none of the traditional canons of rhetoric or literary criticism, but in the phenomena of syntax and of syntax alone. Take, for example, canto XI of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, in which the omission of the verb in the principal clause adds an element of calm that could not otherwise be secured :

"Calm is ¹ the morn without a sound,
 Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
 And only thro' the faded leaf
 The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
 And on these dews that drench the furze,
 And all the silvery gossamers
 That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,
 To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
 These leaves that redden to the fall;
 And in my heart, if calm at all,
 If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
 And waves that sway themselves in rest,
 And dead calm in that noble breast
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep."

Compare now the brooding quietude of those stanzas with the jerkiness of these lines, so filled with verbs :

"I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night:
 I see the cabin-window bright;
 I see the sailor at the wheel."

Verbs denote activity and change: they are bustling and fussy. Their presence in certain reaches of lyric poetry would be as nullifying as the creaking of organ pedals during a dirge. When thought gives way to feeling, when the emotion of the poet no longer soars but poises and hovers, the absence of the verb,—a purely syntactical phenomenon,—becomes a most marked characteristic of the sentence structure. Note the effect in these lines :

¹The only verb of a principal clause in these five stanzas is the second word of the first line, *is*. Note how well the colon after each stanza indicates the uniformity of mood maintained.

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!"

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!"

Observe in these lines from Poe how quickly the verbs take flight when the poet's activity of thought is merged into mere brooding :

"And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams,—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams."

In the study of lyric poetry, especially of the elegy, the omission or subordination of formal assertion will be found a suggestive index to the poet's changing mood.

But the syntax of omission may be employed not only to interpret literature, but to interpret history as well. Everyone has observed how quickly different professions, industries, societies of every sort, gather about them a special vocabulary. But more interesting than vocabulary is the phase of syntax that these social organizations exhibit. The members not only employ new words but they omit well-known words that will be supplied, as it were, from the common fund. This is a form of abridged syntax. Transitive verbs especially are used intransitively, because the direct object is understood and need not be expressed.

When we say, for example, that Miss A. *plays* well, only an irredeemable outsider would reply "Plays what?" So, too, in certain circles, we shall be readily understood when we say that Miss B. *paints* well or *draws* well; that C. *throws* well, or *kicks* well. Students of language had long ago noticed how frequently transitive verbs become intransitive; but it remained for M. Bréal to interpret this trend from transitive to intransitive. "An abundance of intransi-

tive verbs in a language," says M. Bréal,¹ "is a sign of civilization." And the remark is as true as it is acute, provided, of course, these intransitive verbs were once transitive. Such intransitive verbs do increase in number just as men become more closely banded together, and as civilization succeeds in diffusing a common fund of information. There are very few of these verbs in Old English; but they swarm in Modern English, especially in nineteenth century English, because society is now more closely knit. The newspapers alone have in this way made it possible to use scores of transitive verbs intransitively.

The same is true, of course, in the case of adjectives used without their nouns. "The blue and the gray," "The New York Central," "The Phi and the Di," and similar abridged phrases testify to a fund of common intelligence and common interests. The study, then, of these omissions in the different stages of any language would not result in a barren array of statistics, but would furnish an index to a people's gradual nationalization, and indicate how far collectivism was replacing individualism.²

And why should not syntax aid in the interpretation of history? History is one: a nation's art, science, architecture, laws, literature, and language are but parts of a larger whole.

"Deep and broad, where none may see,
Spring the foundations of that shadowy throne
Where man's one nature, queen-like, sits alone,
Centred in a majestic unity."

Shall we study the evolution of a people's character in the way they build their bridges and highways and homes, and

¹*Essai de Sémantique* (1897), p. 330. Instead of "un signe de civilisation," would not "un signe de organisation" be more accurate? But M. Bréal's book is too good to be lightly emended.

²I am inclined to think that the dropping of inflections is another indication of collectivism. Words do not have to be pronounced to a finish when speakers have learned to presume on a community of ideas and information.

not in the way they build their sentences? All that man has done existed first in the mind and was latent in the language of will and purpose before it was bodied in deed. And back of man, antedating the universe itself, there was the λόγος; *καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν.*

The uniformity that exists in all the varied phenomena of human history finds its parallel, where we should expect to find it, in the corresponding uniformity of linguistic processes. This latter uniformity is not in individual words, or sounds, or inflections. It is in word relations, that is, in syntax. It is one of those touches of nature that make the whole world kin. Polynesian words, for example, are not our words; but the Polynesians have their subjunctive mood, their passive voice, their array of tenses and cases, because the principles of syntax are psychical and therefore universal.

A good illustration of the interpretative attitude toward syntax is found in Professor Gildersleeve's *Essays and Studies*:¹ "We contrast the epos of Greece with the epos of Rome. One grammatical difference sums the whole matter up. No historical present in the one, while the historical present abounds in the other, and nothing more is needed for him who appreciates the range of grammatical phenomena."

Indeed it is not easy to set bounds to the radiations of syntactical distinctions into other departments of thought and activity. The strongest stanza yet written by an American poet seems to me to express a truth already taught by syntax. You will remember that all the Romance tongues discarded the endings of the Latin future indicative, and gradually built their future tense out of the verb *have* preceded by an infinitive.² French *Je chanterai*, for example, is literally and

¹ See chapter on *Grammar and Aesthetics*. See also Elster's *Prinzipien der Literaturwissenschaft* (1897), pp. 414-424.

Both authors discuss the æsthetic side of syntax. As used in this paper it will be seen that interpretative syntax includes æsthetic syntax, but more besides.

² So, too, Old English *Ich sceal* (*sculan*), *I shall*, meant originally *I have to, ought to, or must*. It is interesting to find that Modern Greek has discarded

was originally not *I shall sing*, but *I have to sing* (= *J'ai chanter*, *Ego habeo cantare*). And so for Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. The expression connoted obligation or necessity, as in Tertullian's *quem habemus odisse* (*Apologeticus* 37), *whom we have to (must) hate*. But the Romance tongues have gradually passed from the obligatory *I have to*, *you have to*, *he has to* to the voluntary and colorless *I shall*, *you will*, *he will*. An imposed duty has become a recognized and accepted duty. Says Emerson,—

“So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When duty whispers low, Thou must,
The youth replies, I can!”

One of the questions most hotly discussed by the so-called¹ Lake School of poets related to the distinction between fancy and imagination. The distinction is a vital one in literary criticism, and was best stated by Wordsworth.² It is now generally agreed that, while both imagination and fancy must work with materials already furnished, imagination is the constructive faculty, fancy the decorative faculty. Whatever be the kind of imagination employed—whether poetic, scientific, practical, architectural, or inventive—its chief function is to build; while fancy, following after, adorns or modifies.

the old future and evolved our *will* + infinitive. “The habit of forming the ordinary Future with $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ had doubtless established itself in the vulgar speech long before it was admitted in the literary style; and can hardly have arisen before the vernacular had begun to diverge very decidedly from the classical type, *i. e.*, not earlier than about 300 A. D., possibly much later. In low Latin such forms as *cantare habeo* for *cantabo* became common from the sixth century onwards.”—Vincent and Dickson's *Handbook to Modern Greek* (1893), p. 326.

¹“So-called” because the School as a school had no existence. “Wordsworth and Southey never had one principle in common,” says De Quincey. See his second paper on Coleridge in *Literary Reminiscences*.

²See his *Poetical Works*, Preface to edition of 1815. The distinction made by Wordsworth is quoted almost in full by Fernald in *English Synonyms and Antonyms*, p. 210.

May we not interpret this distinction in terms of syntax by saying that imagination is shown in a writer's choice of subjects and predicates, fancy in his choice of adjectives and adverbs? Strip Browning of all that functions either as adjective or as adverb, reduce his sentences to the bare forms of psychological subject and psychological predicate, and have you not still a strong and stimulative body of thought? Would Tennyson fare so well? Could you find the residue of Swinburne? Wordsworth's illustration of fancy is Shakespeare's description of Queen Mab,—

"In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the forefinger of an alderman."

Those lines, you see, are purely adjectival. They do not assert, they attribute. But when the great dramatist says,—

"The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath,"

or

"Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain top,"

or

"The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact,"

or when David says, "The Lord is my shepherd,"—we feel that the human outlook has been permanently broadened. Pontoons have been constructed joining things that were never before joined. But these pontoons unite subject to predicate, not adjective to noun, or adverb to verb.

Of course, imagination and fancy usually go together. But the essence of the distinction is that the products of the imagination, like the joint creations of subject and predicate, have a life of their own and are thus, to a degree, independent; while the forms of fancy, like the functions of adjective and adverb, are parasitic and thus relative. "The best in this kind are but shadows." The difference between the literature

of Elizabeth's reign and the literature produced by the Caroline and Metaphysical poets who followed, is that in the first a full and splendid stream of imaginative thought flows from subject to predicate; in the second, this current is diverted and dissipated among adjectives and adverbs: what should have been tributaries have become bayous, and drain rather than swell the central flow.

One of the problems that to-day are pressing most insistently for solution is, To what extent may syntactical peculiarities be relied upon as tests in determining authorship? Everyone even cursorily familiar with the methods of biblical, especially of Old Testament criticism will have observed the importance that is attached to the argument from syntax. The insufficiency of some of these tests is equalled only by the defiant assurance with which mutually exclusive results are defended. Is it possible to find in syntax a criterion of authorship? Not if syntax be divorced from personality and reduced to gross statistics; not if it be confined to the triangle of the empirical, the historical, and the genetic, which, according to Gröber,¹ are the only possible kinds of syntax.

Suppose that we have two poems and wish to know whether they were written by the same author. Let us call them A and B. If A have many peculiarities of construction not shared by B, if the *ἅπαξ λεγόμενα* of the one be the *δεκάκις λεγόμενα* of the other,—this alone proves nothing. They might still have come from the same author, the differences being due to a difference of topic, of purpose, of mood, of range or elevation of thought. Let us first interpret the syntax of each poem separately. If the syntactical peculiarities of A are found to be numerous and significant enough to enable us to get at the author's personality, and if the syntactical peculiarities of B are also numerous and significant enough to reflect personality, we

¹*Grundriss der romanischen Philologie*, vol. I, p. 211 (1888).

are provided at once with invaluable evidence in determining whether the two poems came from the same author; but if the syntactical evidences are neither numerous nor vital enough to betray personality—and mere number counts for little¹—the evidence from syntax is void of force.

Let me give a simple illustration. Suppose I desired to know whether a certain anonymous novel were written by Zola. I should turn for evidence to a dissertation which I have recently read with the keener pleasure because the author's method fortifies my own views as to the range and personal correlations of syntax. The dissertation is entitled *Syntactical Studies in the Language of Zola*,² and is by Eugène Gaufinez. Dr. Gaufinez confines his study to Zola's *Docteur Pascal* and devotes the body of his work, sixty pages, to the mere enumeration of Zola's peculiarities in the use of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and the other parts of speech. Most dissertations would have stopped at the bare enumeration; but Dr. Gaufinez goes a step farther. He adds a page of admirable interpretation. Zola's syntactical usages were found to be numerous enough and significant enough to enable Dr. Gaufinez to see through them into the method and personality of the novelist. And his interpretation, which I quote in full, not only might serve as a criterion of authorship, should occasion arise, but shows also the close affinity between syntax

¹"The argument from style," says Driver (*Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 167, n. 2), "is cumulative: hence expressions which, if they stood alone, would have no appreciable weight, may help to support an inference, when they are combined with others pointing in the same direction." The argument from style becomes cumulative in the true sense only when the concurrent expressions are both numerous and significant,—significant enough to be distinctive and characteristic. The stereotyped commonplaces of expression, however numerous the coincidences, cannot be relied upon as trustworthy evidence. See the admirable section on "Bestimmung des Autors" in Bernheim's *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*.

²*Etudes syntaxiques sur la langue de Zola dans le Docteur Pascal*, Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde, von Eugène Gaufinez, Bonn, 1894.

and literary criticism, when syntax is weighed in the balances of style.

Dr. Gaufinez thus summarizes and interprets his results :

“Two principles, different but not opposed, seem to have dictated the laws of Zola’s syntax. These are, briefly, (1) the principle of picturesque expression and (2) the principle of natural expression.

“(1) The tendency of Zola, as indeed of all the impressionists, is to paint rather than to narrate, to produce sensations with things rather than to awaken ideas about things. Let us picture him at work, pen in hand, his mind’s eye fixed on some image that appeals to his powerful imagination. Rapidly he sketches the rough draft, adds a few of the most significant details ; then, as his attention is by degrees directed to the different outlines of the picture, he notes and determines these, returns and emphasizes those that are most striking, until, from this confusion of details, there is disengaged the living picture which he has before his eyes, the novelist really building up his work before us. Hence his jerky style, with its strange phrases ; hence his massing of adjectives and participles, his abstract terms, his frequent imperfections. They are, so to speak, the strokes of the painter’s brush.

“(2) The second principle which controls Zola’s syntax is the determination to write just as people talk, to give to his style the untaught cadence of ordinary speech. Thought can be expressed with perfect clearness without a rigorous adherence to the rules of grammar. Then, too, popular and conversational speech, in spite of its licenses—or better, on account of them—has a vivacity and picturesqueness of its own, quite different from that found in the language of scholars. Hence, in the style of Zola the numerous inversions and ellipses ; hence his peculiar punctuation, and all those turns of expression that so often make us feel that we are listening to spoken speech instead of reading written speech.

"These are the two principles on which the syntax of Zola seems to be founded."

Dr. Gaufinez has here interpreted syntax in terms of personality and stylistic effect. His summary would be of great value as Zola evidence in case of disputed authorship, and has, besides, a solidity and definiteness that contrast sharply with the elegant trifling that parades itself in high places to-day under the name of literary criticism.

Before syntactical distinctions can be made to disclose their full wealth of import and suggestiveness, they must be held long in solution. The attempt must not be made to force a premature and barren crystallization. It is one thing to classify, another to interpret. The more sympathetically the syntax of English is studied, the more striking will appear the interrelation of its parts and the continuity of its functions. One comes almost to believe that the norms of syntax are indestructible, so persistently do they reappear in unexpected places. If a construction is common in Old English prose, let the student watch confidently for its reappearance or for its lineal descendant somewhere in Modern English. Trust no man who tells you that it is dead.

Take, for example, Old English *weorðan*, *to become*. We are told in works on English syntax that *weorðan* survives to-day, like a fly in amber, only in the crystallized expression *Woe worth*, as in Scott's

"Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!"

We are informed that *weorðan* and *bēon* had come to mean pretty much the same thing; and that, although German preserves the distinction between *Er ist alt* and *Er wird alt*, Old English had so confused the distinction that *weorðan*, feeling itself *de trop*, left the field to *bēon*.

That is but a half truth. *Weorðan* to-day is absent in the flesh, but present in the spirit. It survives in a score of constructions that have been called into existence solely to

take its place and to transmit its syntactic function. To me one of the most interesting things in the syntax of English is the way in which verbs the most remote in meaning from *weorðan* have come at last to function as its substitute. Remember that in Old English if a man *became* sick, or rich, or crazy, or anything else, *weorðan* was the preëempted copula, as is *werden* in Modern German. Note now the words that have been summoned from century to century for the purpose of filling the space left vacant by the passing of *weorðan*: We say that a man *becomes*¹ rich, *falls* sick or *takes* sick, *goes* crazy (dogs *run* mad, cows and streams *run* dry), *grows* worse, *gets* tired, and *turns* red. These verbs are not mere link-words (as in, he *stood* amazed), nor do they denote duration or attainment. They denote the process of attainment, a *becoming*, and are the chosen delegates of old *weorðan*. It is a long call from some of these words to *weorðan*. The transitive verbs in the list had to pass through a middle voice. Thus, "I *got* sick" was preceded by "I *got myself* sick," just as "Get out of my sight" was preceded by the reflexive construction found in *Gen.* 31, 13: "Get thee out from this land." The word *go* seems at present to be most rapidly widening its sphere. Representative English authors use it in the sense of *become* before *serious*, *content*, *silent* and *stale*. With a reach from *crazy* to *silent*, it would seem that *go* bids fair to rival *become* as the most popular representative of ancestral *weorðan*.

Now do not these facts belong to any exhaustive treatment of *weorðan*? It is not enough to say that *weorðan*, *to become*, was moribund in Chaucer's time and dead before Shakespeare was born. Our language could afford to lose the form but not the syntactic function of so indispensable a word as *weorðan*. If syntax has to deal with the living elements of

¹ Old English *becuman*, which has given us *become*, meant only *to come*, *arrive*, *happen*; never *to become*. The *New English Dictionary* gives c. 1175 A. D. as the earliest date for *become* followed by a complementary adjective or substantive.

language and not with its bleached bones, it must correlate and interpret the subtle transitions of function, the interplay of resources, the distribution of activities that keep a language the adequate vehicle of a nation's thought. By the traditional methods of approach—the empiric, the historical, and the genetic—you would learn when *weorðan* formally died, and what ailed it. You would be told of its ancestry, but not a word as to its progeny.

I emphasize, therefore, the continuity of English syntax, and the necessity of a comprehensive knowledge of Modern English before this continuity can be adequately realized. The leaders in the study of English syntax have from the first been Germans. Not speaking English as their mother-tongue and of course not thinking in English, they would be the first to admit themselves incapable of appreciating the niceties of Modern English syntax.¹ Under their influence great results, it is true, have been accomplished. The study of Old English and of Middle English has been raised to the dignity of a science; but Modern English has been neglected. The syntax of Alfred is being exhaustively treated; but no one has investigated the syntax of Browning or Tennyson or Carlyle or Ruskin. So far as I know, not one monograph has been written on the syntax of any English author born since the year 1600.

The study of English syntax as a whole remains, therefore, fragmentary. The syntax of earlier periods is yet to be correlated with the syntax of later periods. Until this is done—and it can be done only by those who speak English as their mother-tongue—the range and persistency of syn-

¹ Paul, *Prinzipien*, 3d ed., p. 28: "An der Muttersprache lässt sich daher das Wesen der Sprechthätigkeit leichter erfassen als an irgend einer anderen." But Stoffel (*Studies in English*, Preface, p. vii) holds that "anomalous idioms . . . stand a better chance of being made the subject of systematic study by foreigners than by natives." True, but "anomalous idioms" constitute about as much of syntax as "Gorgons and Hydras and Chimæras dire" do of zoölogy.

tactical phenomena cannot be fully apprehended, and interpretation cannot be thorough-going.

In thus correlating the old with the new, it is surprising to see how little has been done even in the minutiae of syntax. One illustration will suffice. Investigators in Old English have offered various explanations of the singular verb that is found in relative clauses after *ælc þāra þe*, *nān þāra þe*, and *ænig þāra þe*, meaning respectively *each of those who*, *no one of those who*, and *any one of those who*. They seem to see in these expressions a syntactical curio, an Old English Melchisedec "without father, without mother, without descent." Nothing could be further from the truth. The idiom may be found in the works of almost every standard writer of this century, and in newspapers and conversation it is rare that one finds the plural used instead of the singular.

Irving speaks of the alleged prejudice of Americans against Englishmen as "one of the errors which *has* been diligently propagated." William Dean Howells says, "He appeared to me one of the noblest creatures that ever *was*." Thackeray, Dickens, Emerson, and Ruskin furnish numerous illustrations; and Macaulay, purist of purists, says, "This reply [of Mr. Burke] has always struck us as one of the finest that ever *was* made in Parliament."¹ It is not my purpose now to proffer a solution of the difficulty; but I contend that the solution will be reached through Modern English more easily than through Old English, because in Modern English our syntactic sense has freer play.

Not only are syntactical distinctions long-lived, not only (as in the case of *weorðan*) do they survive the particular forms in which they originated, but they sometimes shift the

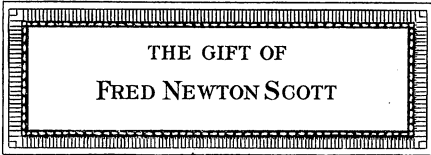
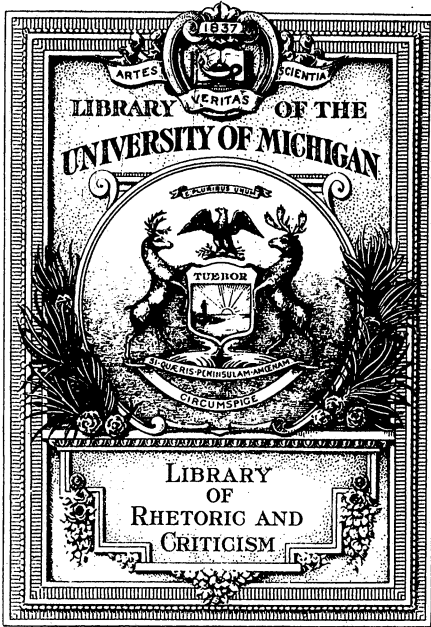
¹The singular is also found in Old French and Modern French (see Tobler's *Vermischte Beiträge*, I, p. 196), and in Gothic and Modern German (see Paul's *Prinzipien*, 3d ed., p. 285). Neither Tobler nor Paul cites any illustrations from Modern English; nor has anyone sought help in sentences like "He is the best *man that has* been here," in which, to my mind, the true solution lies.

sphere of their activity. Exorcised in one place, they take refuge in another. English and American students, for example, find it difficult to appreciate the distinction that the Germans make between *du* and *Sie*, the French between *tu* and *vous*, the Spanish between *tu* and *Usted*, and the Italians between *tu* and *voi*. It does not help matters to be told that a corresponding distinction once obtained in English between *thou* and *you*. It still seems unreasonable that anyone should have used *thou* to his wife and yet to his servant; that the same word that figured among the members of one's family as a term of intimacy and affection was a gross insult if applied to a stranger or an equal. Under what modern formula may we group these apparently incongruous elements?

The difficulty is removed at once by recurring to our use or omission of such titles as Miss, Mrs., and Mr. A man does not call his wife Miss Mary (or Mrs. Jenkins); he does not call his daughter Miss Alice, his housemaid Miss Jane, or his cook Miss Bridget. In these instinctive omissions we group into one category the same persons that the Germans group under *du*, and our forefathers grouped under *thou*. With outsiders and equals we use, as the case may be, the unprompted Miss or Mrs. or Mr. This again is the circle of the German *Sie* and of our own former *ye* or *you*. The distinction, therefore, is not lost in Modern English. It has only shifted its territory. The syntactical feeling that dictated the proper use of *thou* and *you* to our forbears survives intact to-day. It has passed, however, from the realm of the personal pronoun to the realm of the titular prefix, and has become more social than syntactical.

In conclusion, the illustrations that have been adduced are sufficient, I trust, to show that the significance of a syntactical complex is not exhausted by tracing it back to its earliest stage, even when the tracers sent out prove entirely successful. We must trace forward as well as backward. In the summary of a man's life and influence his children count for

fully as much as his great-grandfather. Nor is syntax a straight line. There are lateral relationships as well as lineal relationships. The clue to one phenomenon may have to be sought in another and apparently irrelevant phenomenon. There are affinities with style, there are notes of personality, there are analogies and radiations. If the investigator overlooks them, he will do so at the peril of every conclusion that he announces. His work may be exhaustive, but his results will be none the less fragmentary.



∞ Reviewed by Preservation 2001

